

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 JAKARTA 07571 080910Z

ACTION SS-25

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS PINT, SHUM, ID
SUBJECT: DEFENSE MINISTER JUSUF'S COMMENTS ON EAST TIMOR
AND THE RELEASE OF POLITICAL DETAINEES

1. WHEN I SAW DEFENSE MINISTER JUSUF ON JUNE 8, I ASKED AS A FOLLOW-UP TO THE VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT ABOUT PROGRESS IN OPENING EAST TIMOR TO FOREIGN VISITORS. JUSUF SAID SUHARTO HAS AGREED AND THAT THINGS ARE MOVING RAPIDLY. HE AND THREE OTHER CABINET MEMBERS (MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WIDJOJO, MINISTER OF FINANCE WARDHANA AND MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS PURNOMOSIDI) WILL VISIT EAST TIMOR NEXT WEEK TO DEVELOP FIRM RECOMMENDATIONS ON MOVES TO ACCELERATE THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA. IN MID-JULY, PRESIDENT SUHARTO WILL VISIT EAST TIMOR TO INAUGURATE A CIVILIAN AIRSTRIP OUTSIDE DILI. THIS WILL MAKE POSSIBLE REGULARLY SCHEDULED GARUDA FLIGHTS TO DILI. IT WILL THEN BE POSSIBLE FOR PRIVATE CITIZENS (HE MENTIONED BUSINESSMEN IN PARTICULAR) TO VISIT THE AREA. I ASKED WHETHER THIS WOULD INCLUDE FOREIGNERS. JUSUF SAID IT WAS DEFINITELY WOULD. IN RESPONSE TO ANOTHER QUESTION, HE SAID IT WOULD ALSO INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES OF PRIVATE WELFARE ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICE. INDONESIA'S OBJECTIVE, ACCORDING TO JUSUF, IS TO MAKE THE MAXIMUM POSSIBLE PROGRESS BEFORE THE UNGA SESSION IN

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MOVING AHEAD WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND STABILITY IN EAST TIMOR.

2. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, JUSUF SAID HE WAS CONVINCED THAT THE SECURITY SITUATION IN EAST TIMOR COULD BE BROUGHT UNDER FIRM CONTROL BEFORE THE UNGA SESSION THIS FALL, AND THAT THIS WOULD NOT BE A SIGNIFICANT BARRIER TO MOVING AHEAD WITH

ACCELERATED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS. HE SAID INDONESIA ESTIMATES THERE ARE BETWEEN 600 AND 650 HARD CORE FETILIN GUERRILLAS IN THE MOUNTAINOUS REGIONS. THEY HAVE AN ESTIMATED 400 WEAPONS, BUT ONLY ABOUT 60 PERCENT OF THESE HAVE AMMUNITION. INDONESIA HAS NO INDICATION THAT FRETILIN IS OBTAINING ADDITIONAL WEAPONS OR AMMUNITION FROM OUTSIDE, AND BELIEVES THE PRESENT GROUP CAN BE BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL BY ACCELERATED PROBING ACTIONS BY THE INDONESIAN ARMY. MEMBERS OF FRETILIN AND THEIR SUPPORTS ARE CONTINUING TO COME OVER TO THE INDONESIAN SIDE, AND THE GOI EXPECTS THIS TREND TO ACCELERATE AS AMMUNITION FOOD AND OTHER NECESSITIES BECOME EVEN MORE SCARCE.

3. TURNING TO THE ROUGHLY 20,000 POLITICAL PRISONERS REMAINING FROM THE ABORTIVE 1965 COUP ATTEMPT, JUSUF SAID THAT FROM 10,000 TO 20,000 OF THESE WILL BE RELEASED BETWEEN AUGUST AND OCTOBER THIS YEAR. IT IS HIS HOPE AND BELIEF THAT THE FIGURE WILL BE VERY CLOSE TO 20,000 JUSUF ADDED THAT THERE MIGHT BE 25 OR SO HARD CORE COMMUNISTS AMONG THE DETAINEES WHO COULD NOT BE RELEASED AT THIS TIME, BUT THESE WOULD BE PROCESSED IN ACCORDANCE WITH INDONESIA'S SECURITY LAWS. THESE ACCELERATED RELEASES, HE SAID, REPRESENT AN EFFORT TO PUT THE PROBLEM OF POLITICAL DETAINEES "BEHIND US."

4. JUSUF SAID THE GOI IS ALREADY WORKING ON THE ADMINISTRATIVE SECRET

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ARRANGEMENTS FOR THESE ACCELERATED RELEASES, BUT DOES NOT WISH TO MAKE A PUBLIC STATEMENT AS YET. SUHARTO PLANS TO ANNOUNCE THE NEW TIMETABLE IN HIS NATIONAL DAY ADDRESS DURING AUGUST. (THE NEWS IS ALMOST CERTAIN TO LEAK BEFORE THEN.) ASKED IF THE DETENTION CAMP AT BURU WOULD BE CLOSED, JUSUF SAID IT WOULD BE. DETAINEES NOW HELD THERE WOULD BE RETURNED TO THEIR HOMES ON JAVA BUT WOULD BE PERMITTED VOLUNTARILY, IF THEY WISHED, TO RETURN TO RESETTLEMENT CENTERS ON BURU OR ELSEWHERE IF THEY FOUND IT DIFFICULT OR IMPOSSIBLE TO OBTAIN EMPLOYMENT IN JAVA.

5. I TOLD JUSUF THAT I WOULD ASK THAT THIS INFORMATION BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE VICE PRESIDENT. JUSUF EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THIS.

6. COMMENT: PLEASE HOLD THIS INFORMATION CLOSELY. A LEAK ABROAD, WHICH MIGHT IMPLY FOREIGN PRESSURE ON INDONESIA, COULD SET BACK THE WHOLE PROGRAM.
MASTERS

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NNN

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